Apprising world leaders about Indo-Pak relations

1997. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prime Minister during his three nations tour in May, 2003 met top world leaders and briefed them on the developments in India-Pakistan relations besides discussing bilateral ties; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Apart from bilateral relations, the situation in South Asia was *inter alia* discussed in Prime Minister's meetings with the world leaders during his three nations visit in May, 2003. Prime Minister's initiative of extending once again the hand of friendship to Pakistan received wide support and appreciation and his interlocutors expressed hope that Pakistan would reciprocate. All of them spoke strongly against the menace of terrorism.

Retrenchment of foreign labourers by Saudi Arabia

†1998. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the Government of Saudi Arabia has planned to retrench foreign labourers;

(b) if so, the number of Indian labourers likely to be rendered jobless as a result thereof;

(c) whether Government have held any talks with Saudi Arabia in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof along with the outcome of the talks; and

(e) the steps being taken by Government to provide employment to Indian labourers returning from Saudi Arabia?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) to (d) Yes. In recent years Saudi Government has announced as a part of its national policy a number of

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.